

STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
18<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT  
**JAIME HERRERA**  
ASSISTANT FLOOR LEADER

State of  
Washington  
House of  
Representatives

TRANSPORTATION  
TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY  
& COMMUNICATIONS  
HEALTH CARE  
& WELLNESS



July 8, 2009

Senator Patty Murray  
Senator Maria Cantwell  
Congressman Brian Baird  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators and Congressman:

I am writing in regards to the current debate on health care reform that is taking place in Congress. As a State Legislator and member of the House Health Care and Wellness Committee I am aware of the complexity of these issues and the potential impacts of reforms on the citizens we represent, and I hope that you will consider my thoughts and concerns on these issues.

I agree our health care system is in need of some reforms; however, reform should not be synonymous with government-run health care or put the fiscal well being of our nation at risk. I am particularly concerned about proposals that include adding another public health plan designed to compete with private health plans, but on an unlevel playing field that will be subsidized by taxpayers. And I think it is disingenuous to tell the citizens we represent that the public plan option will not affect their ability to keep their current physicians and health care plans, as we know that the most individuals get their health insurance from their employers and many employers will be forced to cancel health insurance for employees due to the billions, if not trillions, of dollars in taxes that would be required to implement health care for all. It is clear millions of Americans could lose their health insurance and be forced into government-run health care under these proposals.

You need only look at the problems with government-run health care in our own state to understand my concerns with expanding it. Funding for our state's Basic Health Plan, which provides subsidized coverage for low-income individuals, was recently cut by 43 percent. This has led to drastic premium increases, in some instances by 100 percent, and enrollment is estimated to decrease by around 35 percent. Medicaid provider rates have also been reduced, which could lead to even more access problems for those on Medicaid. There is an important role for government in health care, but it should be limited to helping people who truly cannot afford it.

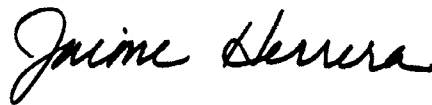
In the 2009 legislative session, Washington State Republicans introduced a nine-point plan (see enclosed material) to fundamentally change health care in Washington State. It is based on the belief that people make better decisions about their health care needs than politicians and bureaucrats. The plan would protect those who have quality health care and patient freedom, increase access, lower costs, embrace competition, and fix the state's Basic Health Plan.

I strongly encourage you to consider our plan and the following information as you make important decisions:

- Around 88 percent of Washingtonians currently have health insurance.
- Approximately 51 percent of the uninsured in Washington State are between the ages of 19 and 35, with many choosing not to buy expensive health insurance.
- Government mandates, rules, taxes, and regulations are driving up the cost of health care.
- Medical malpractice laws are forcing doctors to perform unneeded tests and procedures.
- First-dollar costs are driving insurance premiums higher, as people do not see the costs of the care.

Please stand up for American values and its tradition of freedom, and resist proposals that will lead to more costs and less access to quality health care. We can do much better, and the people that you represent deserve much better.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jaime Herrera". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jaime" and last name "Herrera" clearly distinguishable.

Jaime Herrera  
State Representative